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U.S. COAST GUARD CUTTER EVERGREEN
(WLB 295
WAGL 295
WMEC 295
WAGO 295)
U.S. Coast Guard Buoy Tenders, 180' Cactus Class
New London vicinity
New London County
Connecticut

HAER No. CT-188

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C St. NW
Washington, DC 20240

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HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

U.S. COAST GUARD CUTTER EVERGREEN

HAER No. CT-188

RIG/TYPE OF CRAFT:	Cutter (Cactus Class)	
TRADE:	Buoy tending (government)	
OFFICIAL NUMBER:	WAGL-295, WAGO-295, WLB-295, WMEC-295	
PRINCIPAL DIMENSIONS: (As built)	Length:	180'
	Beam:	37'
	Depth:	12'
	Displacement:	935 tons
LOCATION:	Unknown (Transferred to U.S. Navy in 1990)	
DATES OF CONSTRUCTION:	April 15, 1942 - April 30, 1943	
DESIGNER:	Preliminary design by U.S. Lighthouse Service. Interim design work by U.S. Coast Guard. Final design by Marine Iron and Shipbuilding Corporation of Duluth, Minnesota.	
BUILDER:	Marine Iron and Shipbuilding Corporation of Duluth, Minnesota	
PRESENT OWNER:	Unknown	
PRESENT USE:	Unknown	
SIGNIFICANCE:	This vessel was built to serve as a 180' U.S. Coast Guard cutter. The federal government purchased or built thirty-nine of these vessels, built in three sub-classes, from 1942-1944. The U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) designed the 180s to service Aids-to-Navigation (AtoN), perform Search and Rescue missions (SAR), carry out Law Enforcement duties (LE), and conduct ice-breaking operations. Members of the class have served in the USCG from 1942 to the present. They have significantly contributed to safe navigation on inland and international waters in times of peace and war.	
RESEARCHER:	Marc Porter, 2002	

PROJECT INFORMATION:

This project is part of the Historic American Engineering Record (HAER), a long-range program to document historically significant engineering and industrial works in the United States. The HAER program is administered by the Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record Division (HABS/HAER) of the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, E. Blaine Cliver, Chief.

The U.S. Coast Guard Buoy Tenders, 180' Class Recording Project was sponsored by the U.S. Coast Guard, with Captain W. Patrick Lane, Chief, Office of Civil Engineering; Kebby Kelly, Environmental Officer; and Dr. Robert Browning, Historian serving as liaisons. The project was prepared under the direction of HAER Maritime Program Manager Todd Croteau. The historical report was produced by Marc Porter and edited by Justine Christianson, HAER Historian, NCSHPO.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON THE U.S. COAST GUARD BUOY TENDERS, 180' CACTUS CLASS, SEE:

HAER No. DC-57	U.S. Coast Guard Cutter, 180' Class
HAER No. DC-58	U.S. Coast Guard Cutter, 180' Cactus Class
HAER No. AK-43	U.S. Coast Guard Cutter BALSAM
HAER No. CA-305	U.S. Coast Guard Cutter CLOVER
HAER No. CA-306	U.S. Coast Guard Cutter CONIFER
HAER No. CT-188	U.S. Coast Guard Cutter EVERGREEN
HAER No. FL-15	U.S. Coast Guard Cutter GENTIAN
HAER No. FL-16	U.S. Coast Guard Cutter LAUREL
HAER No. MI-326	U.S. Coast Guard Cutter WOODBINE
HAER No. NY-328	U.S. Coast Guard Cutter SORREL
HAER No. OR-114	U.S. Coast Guard Cutter COWSLIP
HAER No. OR-115	U.S. Coast Guard Cutter CACTUS
HAER No. OR-116	U.S. Coast Guard Cutter CITRUS
HAER No. OR-117	U.S. Coast Guard Cutter TUPELO
HAER No. SC-36	U.S. Coast Guard Cutter MADRONA

Marine Iron and Shipbuilding laid EVERGREEN's keel on April 15, 1942. The tender slipped off the ways on July 3, 1942 and was commissioned as a U.S. Coast Guard cutter on April 30, 1943. It cost $871,946 to construct the tender's hull and machinery.

The new tender spent her first month in service tending AtoN and breaking ice on the Great Lakes. EVERGREEN left the Great Lakes soon after the spring thaw and steamed to Charleston, South Carolina where she was engaged in AtoN work for a short time before reassignment to Boston, Massachusetts. The remainder of the war years were spent based in Boston, but during this time EVERGREEN ranged far from her home port.

EVERGREEN spent time collecting important meteorological information at weather stations far out into the North Atlantic. Weather station vessels were assigned to loiter in a small section of the ocean and gather meteorological data. The information gathered by vessels stationed at key points throughout the Atlantic allowed military planners to dispatch and route aircraft from North America to Great Britain by air, thereby avoiding the time consuming process of transporting planes on ships. This steady influx of new aircraft allowed Allied forces to maintain air attacks against the Axis. While the process bolstered the Allied war effort, it also tested the aircraft, since they had to do trans-Atlantic flights that took them from North America to England by way of Greenland and Iceland. Accurate weather information was an essential component of the planning and determined when to dispatch flights and how to route them.[1]

A variety of ships, from large yachts to 10,000-ton merchant ships, served as weather station vessels in the early years of the war. Later, newer Coast Guard frigates took up the bulk of weather station work. The 180s, thanks to their seakeeping qualities, proved able weather station vessels in the early years. SORREL and CONIFER, in addition to EVERGREEN, took turns on the typically three week long deployments far out into the Atlantic. Though not typically engaged in combat, the weather station vessels faced substantial risks. They were expected to keep station year-round and through heavy weather. Unlike other vessels that ran from storms if possible, the weather station vessels had to let storms pass right over them. Their assigned areas were often frequented by German U-boats, and by virtue of their assignment to stay in a small area, they became the proverbial sitting ducks. No 180 serving on a weather station was seriously threatened by enemy action or inclement weather, but another weather station vessel, MUSKEGET, disappeared with 121 sailors on board in September 1942.[2]

Weather station duty was far from the extent of EVERGREEN's involvement in the war effort. On other patrols the cutter escorted ships transiting the waters around Greenland or served as an

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[1] Malcom F. Willoughby, *The U.S. Coast Guard in World War II* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1957), 127-129.

[2] Willoughby, 127-129.

icebreaker in the same area. She also carried supplies to isolated military installations in the North Atlantic and the Arctic.[3]

After the war, EVERGREEN's home remained Boston, but her duties shifted to AtoN work and service as a platform for scientific research. In 1950, 1957, 1964, and 1967 Evergreen served as part of the International Ice Patrol. She also ranged the length and breadth of the North Atlantic as a research vessel carrying oceanographers and other scientists. These missions took the cutter as far north as the Arctic Circle and as far south as Brazil; she ranged as far east as the British Isles. In 1964 the Coast Guard made EVERGREEN's role official by designating her an oceanographic research vessel, the first in Coast Guard history. During this period EVERGREEN received the first computer installed aboard a government-operated oceanographic research vessel.[4]

Evergreen's career as a research vessel ended on December 23, 1968 when a fire broke out on board. Flooding of the engineering spaces as a result of firefighting efforts compounded the damage from the fire. The hapless tender was placed in storage at Curtis Bay, Maryland after the fire knocked her out of service.

The storage period must have coincided with efforts to repair the fire and water damage sustained in 1968 because in September 1970 EVERGREEN was again underway as a research platform. This time the focus of the research was SAR. Evergreen remained stationed at Curtis Bay, Maryland until 1973; during this period the vessel was engaged in oceanographic and SAR research along the East Coast of North America. For three months in 1972, Evergreen ventured north to conduct Ice Patrol surveys.

In 1974, the tender's home port changed again, this time to New London, Connecticut. From her base in New London, Evergreen continued to conduct oceanographic and SAR research. Her area of operations stretched from The Grand Banks to the South Atlantic Bight. EVERGREEN made another trip to the Curtis Bay Yard in 1979. During this visit the vessel was fitted with a new superstructure and extensive improvements to the scientific equipment. She was also fitted with more advanced navigational equipment.[5]

EVERGREEN underwent conversion from a buoy tender, albeit one functioning primarily as a

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[3] E.D. Bass, EVERGREEN History, in EVERGREEN Cutter File, U.S. Coast Guard Historian's Office.

[4] Pete Capelotti, *Oceanography in the Coast Guard* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Coast Guard Historian's Office, 1996), 7.

[5] USCG Public Affairs Division Caption to Official Photograph G-APA-02-28-73 (8).

research vessel, to a Medium Endurance Cutter in 1982. The conversion was mainly one of designation or assigned duties rather than one of structural change as most of the physical modifications that made EVERGREEN suited to patrol work were completed during the yard period in the early 1970's.

EVERGREEN remained stationed in New London after becoming a Medium Endurance Cutter and assumed SAR and LE duties. After leaving the "Black Fleet" the cutter seized two vessels carrying a total of 31 tons of marijuana. LE duties are not limited to drug interdiction, and in 1986 EVERGREEN seized a commercial fishing vessel for using illegal gear.

EVERGREEN was decommissioned on June 30, 1990. Two months later, she was transferred to the U.S. Navy and dispatched to the Patuxtent River Naval installation.[6]

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[6] Wes Hall, *Historical Context and Statement of Significance: Cactus, Mesquite, and Basswood Classes, United States Coast Guard 180-foot Buoy Tenders (WLBs)* (Castle Hayne, North Carolina: Mid-Atlantic Technology and Environmental Research, 1997), 8; Evergreen Decommissioning Pamphlet, EVERGREEN Cutter File, U.S. Coast Guard Historian's Office; Jeff Beach, interview by author, 10 February 2002, Washington, D.C.

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